

MONITORING OF OFFENDERS REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH THE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY REQUIREMENTS

**A Report to the Governor, House Appropriations Committee,
And Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee**



January 2025

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January 1, 2025

TO: The Honorable Glenn Youngkin, Governor of Virginia

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas
Chair of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Luke E. Torian
Chair of the House Appropriations Committee

Pursuant to the 2009 Appropriation Act, I am respectfully submitting herewith, a *Report on Monitoring of Offenders Required to Comply with the Sex Offender Registry Requirements*. The report is a compilation of the Department's efforts from September 1, 2023, through August 31, 2024.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Settle", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Interim Superintendent

MDH/rsb

Enclosure

Report on Monitoring of Offenders Required to Comply with the Sex Offender Registry Requirements

Preface

Pursuant to the Appropriation Act, the Department of State Police is pleased to provide this report on the monitoring of offenders required to comply with the Sex Offender Registry (SOR) requirements.

Creation and Staffing

The 2006 Session of the Virginia General Assembly allocated the Virginia State Police 45 sworn FTEs (full-time equivalents) as an enforcement component of the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry.

In July 2006, the Sex Offender Investigative Unit (SOIU) was established, consisting of one (1) first sergeant position, four (4) sergeant positions, and forty (40) trooper positions. This unit was placed within the Criminal Justice Information Services Division, which is housed in the Bureau of Administrative and Support Services. The positions of the unit were constructed to provide an enforcement of the sex offender registry laws pursuant to Title 9.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. To ensure proper distribution of these established positions, an in-depth analysis of the existing sex offender population was conducted, resulting in the creation of four (4) regions, with one (1) sergeant and ten (10) troopers assigned to each region. Each region was further divided into smaller geographical areas to ensure the sex offender population is properly served.

In 2006, when the SOIU was originally conceived, the offender to trooper ratio was 120:1. In the eighteen years since the implementation of the SOIU, legislative changes requiring additional types of offenders to register, coupled with the growth of the sex offender population, has pushed the ratio of sex offenders to troopers to 287:1. To further ensure efficiency, each region was divided into duty posts, or small geographical work units, to ensure that manpower was distributed evenly within each region.

As of August 31, 2024, the FSOIU (renamed Firearms and Sex Offender Investigative Unit in early 2021) monitors, registers, re-registers, and verifies employment and residency of 12,926 sex offenders. The *2017 Manpower Augmentation Plan* staffing model recommends the Department assign one trooper per 100 sex offenders living in Virginia communities. Implementation of this staffing model would require 85 additional troopers.

Effective July 1, 2012, forty-three (43) civilian compliance officer positions within the SOIU were authorized. The positions were advertised in March 2012 in anticipation of the newly created positions. The Department received 2,616 applications. The applicants were screened, interviewed, and underwent a thorough background investigation. Twenty-four (24) compliance officers were hired on July 9, 2012. The compliance officers completed two (2) weeks of training at the Virginia State Police Academy, receiving training in eighteen (18) different topics, to include sex offender laws, methods of effective information gathering, database utilization, report writing, civil liability, ethics and leadership, and defensive tactics. Upon graduating, the compliance officers were assigned to SOIU troopers for completion of field training. An additional fifteen (15) compliance officers were hired October 15, 2012.

Recurrently, there is a high level of turnover in the compliance officer ranks. From September 1, 2023, through August 31, 2024, there have been a total of nine (9) compliance officer vacancies. The Department filled six (6) of those vacancies and converted three (3) to sworn trooper positions to address areas of high sex offender/trooper ratios and firearms investigations. As of August 31, 2024, thirty-two (32) compliance officers were employed, with the following locations without compliance officer coverage: Augusta, Carroll, Fairfax, Floyd, Galax, Grayson, Henry, Highland,

Martinsville, Patrick, Staunton, and Waynesboro. The Department is in the process of filling these positions, which play a vital role in the registry process. The compliance officers handle thousands of in-person home, school, and work verifications yearly. Without the compliance officers, these duties would fall to the troopers, who are tasked with investigating thousands of violations yearly.

In addition to the assigned in-person verifications, the compliance officers also complete the necessary reports, assist Bureau of Field Operations' offices with walk-in registrations, track down missing or incomplete information submitted to the registry, and perform other administrative/clerical duties. Compliance officers are often required to appear in court and provide testimony. The Department uses them to complement troopers in the FSOIU, with the goal of easing the verification workload of the troopers so they can focus on the criminal investigations.

In 2008, there were 15,297 registered sex offenders in Virginia and the SOIU was responsible for monitoring 5,606 of those offenders with forty (40) troopers. As of August 31, 2024, there were 24,880 registered sex offenders and the FSOIU monitors 12,926 of them. Offenders have increased by 63% and the number monitored by VSP has increased by 131%. Since the unit's inception in 2006, the number of troopers designated for sex offender investigations has increased to forty-five (45); however, this was only due to the Department converting vacant compliance officer positions to trooper positions. Compliance officers play a vital role in the unit, but due to high turnover and elevated vacancy rates, the Department has shifted to converting vacant compliance officer positions to trooper positions. During this reporting period, the Department converted three (3) vacant compliance officer positions to trooper positions.

In December 2022, the FSOIU added an agency management analyst senior position to assist in the timely apprehension of both wanted sex offenders and firearms violation subjects. This analyst provides invaluable long-term case support and utilizes analytical databases to indicate a possible location of absconded subjects.

The Virginia Sex Offender Management System (VSOMS) launched October 30, 2023. This new system allows for a web-based, streamlined process of registering and processing offenders assigned to the registry. VSOMS better serves the citizens of the Commonwealth by providing more accurate and timely information.

Goals and Objectives

The overall objective of the sex offender element of the FSOIU is to enhance public safety by investigating and successfully closing criminal cases involving sex offenders who fail to comply with Title 9.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. The FSOIU is committed to monitoring and prosecuting sex offenders who fail to comply with Title 9.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. The following information provides an overview of the production and progress of the FSOIU.

Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry (SOR) Verifications

As of August 31, 2024, there were 24,880 sex offenders located in Virginia that are listed on the Virginia State Police Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry.

They are divided into three groups: (1) 3,780 registrants under the purview of the Department of Corrections Probation and Parole Services, (2) 12,926 sex offenders whose registration and verifications are the responsibility of the Department of State Police, and (3) the remaining 8,174 registrants are civilly committed or incarcerated in jails or prisons across the state. The Department also tracks another 219 offenders living in other states who work, go to school, or live part-time in Virginia.

From September 1, 2023, through August 31, 2024, the FSOIU conducted 42,325 verifications consisting of: initial registrations, home, work, and school addresses. Our agency also conducts the training for the probation and parole officers, as well as for the troopers and compliance officers assigned to the FSOIU.

Registry Violations

From September 1, 2023, through August 31, 2024, the FSOIU conducted 2,044 criminal investigations for failing to register pursuant to §9.1-902 and providing false information pursuant to §18.2-472.1. During this same period, there were 367 convictions from arrests made across the Commonwealth by the FSOIU for violations of the aforementioned offenses. Many cases are still pending trial. These investigations were initiated from troopers' observations, tips from citizens, information from other law enforcement agencies, information from the Department of Corrections, and other states' sex offender registries. The FSOIU received 2,087 tips regarding potential registry violations through the Department's Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry website. This is a substantial increase of 1,519 tips in one year, which is an increase of 267%. Virtually all of them required follow-up investigation.

Coordination with Federal, State, and Local Law Enforcement Organizations

Interagency coordination during this reporting period includes the following:

- VSP and DOC – VSP area offices register or re-register each incoming sex offender and work to process offenders who are under the supervision of Probation and Parole.
- VSP and DOC – Offenders are monitored through joint initiatives, such as the Halloween meetings that take place at many Probation and Parole District Offices. These meetings are designed to monitor offender movement during this children's celebration of the fall season and educate the offenders on their registration requirements.
- VSP and the United States Marshals Service (USMS) – VSP FSOIU Regions I, II, IV, and VI each have a trooper assigned to the USMS Task Force, which is mutually beneficial to both organizations. FSOIU regularly assists the USMS in areas where a trooper is not assigned to the USMS Task Force.

- VSP and the USMS – VSP collaborates with the USMS to apprehend violent sex offenders at-large across the country. Once located, VSP FSOIU personnel team with the local VSP BCI Fugitive Apprehension Unit to transport the fugitive back to Virginia. In addition to extraditions, VSP and the USMS routinely work collaboratively in locating wanted sex offenders.
- The USMS notifies the Virginia Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry whenever a Virginia registered sex offender makes reservations to travel outside the country.
- VSP and the USMS held numerous operations throughout the year to conduct verifications on sex offenders. In May of 2024, VSP and the USMS conducted 190 verifications in Fairfax and Prince Williams Counties.
- VSP and other states – VSP worked with numerous out-of-state registries to locate and apprehend absconders who crossed state lines to evade compliance with sex offender registration requirements. This enables the FSOIU troopers and compliance officers to extend their network of contacts.
- VSP and local agencies – VSP continues to develop small task force initiatives with local agencies across the state, with the goal of enhancing investigations surrounding SOR violations and to improve the lines of communication throughout Virginia's criminal justice system.
- VSP continuously provides training in the Northern Virginia areas to DOC, local law enforcement, and Probation and Parole. The training encompasses SOR laws, registering sex offenders, and specific laws that ensure safety to minors on school property and school related events in the Commonwealth.
- VSP is continuously sharing intelligence and resources with local law enforcement agencies. By exchanging information and insights, local agencies can better understand the responsibilities of VSP. This enables a more proactive and preventive stance on crimes against minors and sex offender violations; also allowing VSP to assist local law enforcement in investigations involving a sex offender.

Future Endeavors

- Enhancements will continue to be made to the Virginia Sex Offender Management System (VSOMS). Additionally, the VSOMS team is working with other teams/sections within the Criminal Justice Information Services Division (CJIS) to assist SOR in reducing the amount of paper processes currently in place.
- The *2017 Manpower Augmentation Plan* staffing model recommends the Department assign one trooper per 100 sex offenders living in Virginia communities. As of August 31, 2024, however, the FSOIU is operating at a

trooper to offender ratio of 287:1. The Department is currently seeking to supplement the ranks of trooper, sergeant, and first sergeant, which will reduce the trooper to offender ratio and alleviate potential span of control issues among supervisors.

Sex Offender Investigative Unit

The data below represents the period of September 1, 2023, through August 31, 2024, and is provided to illustrate the quantity of work performed by the FSOIU.

Address Verifications per Region

Region	Offenders Verified
Region One (Richmond)	7,334
Region Two (Northern VA)	5,103
Region Three (Central VA)	6,281
Region Four (Southwest VA)	7,211
Region Five (Chesapeake)	11,625
Region Six (Augusta)	4,771
Total	42,325

Address Verifications per Region

Region	30 Day Home/Work	Initial Registration	Home Semi-Annual Verification	School Address Change
Region One	2,531	166	4,609	28
Region Two	1,736	143	3,199	25
Region Three	1,673	414	4,178	16
Region Four	2,422	179	4,605	5
Region Five	4,415	190	6,983	37
Region Six	1,538	79	3,144	10
Totals	14,315	1,171	26,718	121

Criminal Investigations per Region
September 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024

Location	# Investigations
Region One	559
Region Two	292
Region Three	302
Region Four	273
Region Five	464
Region Six	154
Total	2,044

Sex Offender Registry Violation Convictions
September 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024

JURISDICTION	CONVICTIONS	JURISDICTION	CONVICTIONS
ALEXANDRIA	1	NEWPORT NEWS	12
ARLINGTON CO	2	NORFOLK	7
ALLEGHANY CO	5	NORTHAMPTON CO	1
AUGUSTA CO	3	NOTTOWAY CO	2
BEDFORD CO	2	ORANGE CO	4
BOTETOURT CO	3	PAGE CO	2
BRUNSWICK CO	7	PETERSBURG	15
BRISTOL	8	PITTSYLVANIA CO	2
BUCHANAN CO	5	PORTSMOUTH	1
BUCKINGHAM CO	1	PRINCE EDWARD CO	3
CAROLINE CO	3	PRINCE WILLIAM CO	3
CARROLL CO	3	PULASKI CO	2
CHESAPEAKE	11	RICHMOND CITY	33
CHESTERFIELD CO	19	ROANOKE	48
CLARKE CO	1	ROANOKE CO	2
CULPEPER CO	2	ROCKBRIDGE CO	1
CUMBERLAND CO	1	ROCKINGHAM CO	9
DICKENSON CO	1	RUSSELL CO	1
EMPORIA	1	SALEM	3
FRANKLIN CO	2	SCOTT CO	3
FREDERICK CO	4	SHENANDOAH CO	5
FREDERICKSBURG	3	SOUTHAMPTON CO	1
GALAX	4	SPOTSYLVANIA CO	5
GLOUCESTER CO	5	STAFFORD CO	1
GREENSVILLE CO	1	STAUNTON	3
HALIFAX CO	1	SUFFOLK	4
HAMPTON	9	VIRGINIA BEACH	12
HANOVER CO	9	WARREN CO	9
HENRICO CO	14	WASHINGTON CO	8
HENRY CO	2	WAYNESBORO	1
HOPEWELL	3	WESTMORELAND CO	1
KING GEORGE CO	2	WILLIAMSBURG	1
KING WILLIAM CO	1	WINCHESTER	6
LANCASTER CO	1	WISE CO	1
LUNENBURG CO	4	WYTHE CO	3
LYNCHBURG	2	YORK CO	1
MECKLENBURG CO	5	TOTAL:	367

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